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STATE AND CONSUMERS AFFAIRS AGENCY
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New Procedures for Foreign Pharmacy School Graduates

Effective January 1, 2005, California law changes requirements for foreign pharmacy school graduates.

All foreign graduates must obtain certification by the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Committee (FPGEC) before they can apply with the California State Board of Pharmacy to obtain an intern license, take the pharmacist licensure examinations or become licensed as a pharmacist. This new requirement can be found in California Business and Professions Code section 4200, and were enacted by SB 1913 (Senate Business and Professions Committee, Chapter 695, Statutes of 2004).

Effective January 1, 2005, the board is discontinuing evaluations of foreign graduate education, which was the principal purpose of the foreign graduate application. Certification by the FPGEC will take the place of this review by the board. (This means that foreign graduates will not submit to the board a separate foreign graduate application and fee for review of their transcripts.)

The certification process through the FPGEC includes:

- a. Passing the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination.
- b. Passing the Test of Spoken English (administered by Educational Testing Service).
- c. Passing the Test of English as a Foreign Language (administered by Educational Testing Service).
- d. Evaluation by the FPGEC of educational curriculum and foreign licensure requirements of each applicant.

For more information about FPGEC certification, please visit the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) Web site at www.nabp.net. The NABP is the oversight agency for the FPGEC and the certification.

Obtaining a California Intern License:

To qualify for a California intern license, foreign graduates must:

- a. Be certified by the FPGEC.
- b. Submit a completed intern application (which includes: Rules of Professional Conduct, fingerprint background check, processing fee and a copy of the FPGEC certificate).

- c. Provide their social security number to the board*

Processing time: The board requires confirmation of your FPGEC certification. Upon receipt of your application, the board will confirm the authenticity of the certificate with the FPGEC. This verification process requires about 60 days.

The application for an intern license is available for downloading from the board's Web site, www.pharmacy.ca.gov.

Qualifying for the California Pharmacist Licensure Examinations

To qualify for the pharmacist licensure examinations, foreign graduates must:

- a. Be certified by the FPGEC.
- b. Submit a completed Pharmacist Licensure Examination Application (which includes, the application, application fee, examination security agreement, Rules of Professional Conduct, and fingerprint background check). Note: applicants for the examination do not need to resubmit fingerprint background checks and a copy of the FPGEC certificate if these items were already submitted as part of the intern license process.
- c. Submit proof of 1,500 hours of internship or its equivalent.
- d. Submit proof of experience in institutional and community pharmacy settings.
- e. Provide license verification from all states in which they are licensed.

Processing time: approximately 60 days (the same time as for all applicants seeking to take the pharmacist licensure examinations).

The application and detailed instructions for qualifying to take the pharmacist licensure examinations are available for downloading from the board's Web site, www.pharmacy.ca.gov.

Becoming Licensed as a Pharmacist in California:

To qualify for licensure as a pharmacist, applicants must:

- a. Be certified by the FPGEC if they are a graduate of a foreign school of pharmacy
- b. Possess a social security number*
- c. Pass the California Pharmacist Jurisprudence Examination (CPJE)
- d. Pass the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) after January 1, 2004.

* California law requires the board to collect a social security number from all applicants prior to issuance of any license. The board cannot accept a federal tax identification or other number in place of the social security number.

Processing time: The board will notify successful candidates in writing when all requirements have been satisfied to advise them to submit the pharmacist license fee. Licensure usually occurs within two weeks of the board's receipt of the fee.

Candidates who Have Submitted or Obtained a Foreign Graduate Evaluation by the Board of Pharmacy:

Some applicants may have submitted a foreign graduate application to the Board of Pharmacy before September 24, 2004, when the new law effectively prevented the board from processing foreign graduate evaluation forms before the law changes on January 1, 2005. These applicants need to pursue certification by the FPGEC before they can be licensed as an intern, be qualified to take the licensure exams, or become licensed as a pharmacist. Regrettably, refunds of the foreign graduate application fee cannot be issued for those who have received board evaluations of their transcripts.

Other Changes Affecting Applicants:

Other new changes in California law taking effect January 1, 2005, limit the duration of time to a maximum of two years that an intern license may be issued to a foreign graduate. Also effective January 1, 2005, the board can no longer extend an intern license.

If you are a foreign graduate who was initially issued a California intern license after December 31, 2003, the board will automatically extend the expiration date of your intern license for one year. This extension will be made by December 15, 2004, and you will be able to see the new date on the board's Web site license verification system. An updated license will be mailed to you.

If you are a foreign graduate who was initially issued a California intern license on or before December 31, 2003, your intern license may be extended only if you request the extension before December 31, 2004, and only if you have a reason acceptable to the board to warrant an extension. To request an extension, submit a written request stating why the extension should be granted, along with a fee of \$65. (All foreign graduates were mailed letters advising them about these changes in early October 2004.)

After December 31, 2004, the board cannot extend intern licenses.